



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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April 18, 2022

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Oversight  
101 State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period March 16, 2022 – April 15, 2022. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- RI Department of Human Services (DHS) Employee Training
- Pending Applications
- SNAP Timeliness and Lobby/DHS Call Center Summaries
- CCAP Off-Cycle Payments
- Correspondence with Federal Partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yvette Mendez".

Yvette M. Mendez, Acting Director  
RI Department of Human Services



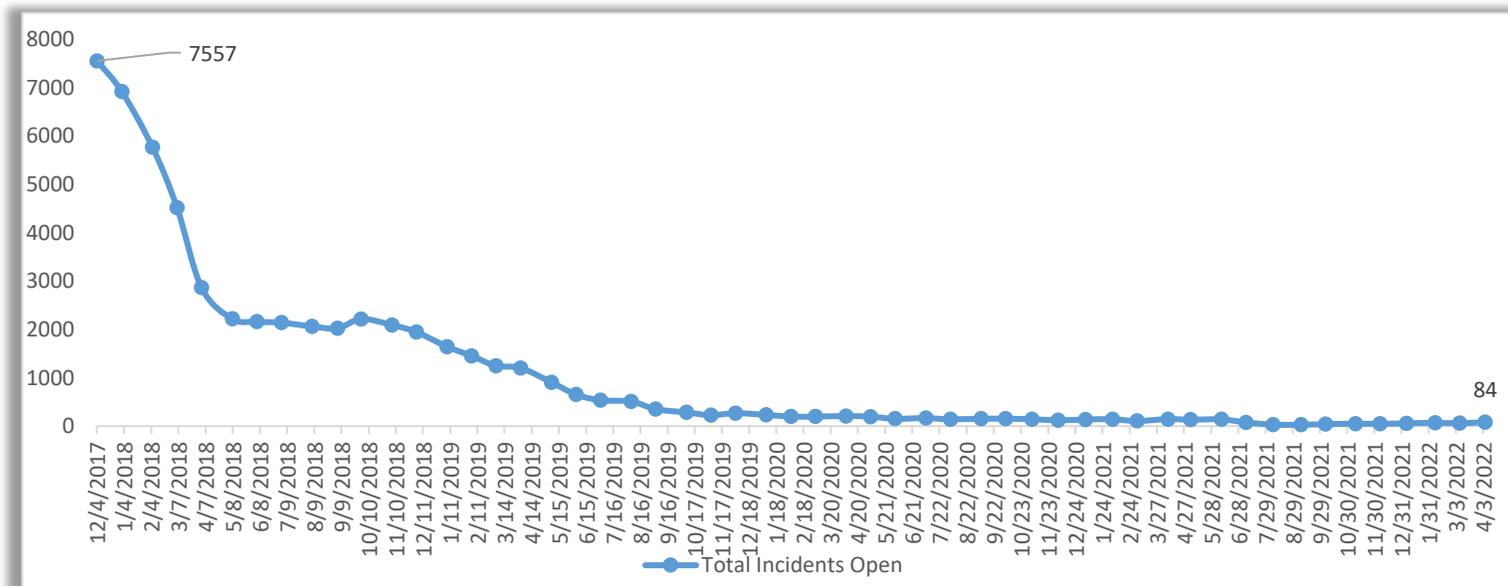
# RI Bridges: Monthly Update

## April 2022

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of the work on the RI Bridges system is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

### SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS customer, worker or provider) has **decreased by 99 percent** since December 2017. As of April 5, 2022, there were **84** open incidents.



### DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since March, DHS hired 12 employees. This includes:

- 1 Administrator, Family and Adult Services
- 1 Assistant Director Financial and Contract Management
- 3 Eligibility Technician I
- 1 Senior Human Services Policy and Systems Specialist
- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician
- 1 Associate Director, ORS
- 1 Casework Supervisor, LTSS
- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Senior Casework Supervisor, Appeals
- 1 Social Case Worker

## DHS TRAINING

### Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff	
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Office Hours (One one-hour session)	3-16-2022	1	0	14	
Knowledge Transfer (Two one-hour sessions; two half hour sessions)	4-13-2022 4-15-2022	1	0	40	
Medicaid Office Hours (One one-hour session)	3-22-2022	1	0	16	
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Wellness Trainings (Two one-hour sessions)	4-12-2022 4-13-2022	1	0	46	
Interface Walkthrough: Bendex (Three one-hour sessions)	3-21-2022 3-24-2022 3-31-2022	3	0	64	
Multicultural Competency Training Series (Two one and half sessions)	3-22-2022 3-29-2022	3	0	13	
RIW Office Hours (One one-hour session)	4-14-2022	1	0	12	
Customer Service Aid Training (Four two-hour sessions)	3-21-2022 3-24-2022 3-28-2022 3-31-2022	8	5	6	
SNAP Training Series (11 two-hour sessions)	3-28-2022 3-29-2022 3-31-2022 4-4-2022 4-5-2022 4-6-2022	4-7-2022 4-11-2022 4-12-2022 4-13-2022 4-14-2022	22	3	17
	<b>Totals</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>228*</b>
Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings (These trainings are self-directed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“DHS FTI, HIPAA, and Confidentiality” -- 668 staff enrolled</li> <li>“Telephonic Signature” -- 120 staff enrolled</li> <li>“Telephonic Signature Elderly and Disabled Adults (EAD)” -- 40 staff enrolled</li> <li>“Asset Verification System (AVS)” -- 117 staff enrolled</li> </ul>	Combined total of <b>1,387*</b> staff trained on LMS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>497 Completed FTI</li> <li>36 Completed Telephonic Signature</li> <li>21 Telephonic Signature EAD</li> <li>87 Completed AVS</li> <li>291 Completed Customer Portal</li> <li>183 Completed SNAP Reinvestment Training</li> </ul>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Customer Portal” – 419 enrolled</li> <li>• “SNAP Reinvestment Updates” -- 417 enrolled</li> <li>• “Visit Record” – 422 enrolled</li> <li>• “RIW Mini-Series” -- 81 enrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 234 Completed Visit Record Training</li> <li>• 38 Completed the RIW Mini-Series</li> </ul>
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\* This number is duplicate and based on number of staff enrolled to attend training.

## Workshop Descriptions

**Medicaid Office Hours:** Medicaid Office Hours are designed to be an open forum to ask system and policy questions related to actual medical cases you are processing. Participants are invited to bring specific cases and/or questions for discussion with a Clinical Training Specialist.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Office Hours:** The SNAP Office hours are led by a Clinical Training Specialist and the SNAP Program staff member. This space is created for eligibility staff that process Rhode Island Works cases with the purpose of having them bring real case examples so that the trainer and program staff member can answer or walk through RIBridges and/or policy questions.

**Knowledge Transfer Training:** This workshop provides an overview of the Interface Review QRG associated with the upgrades.

**Multicultural Competency Training Series:** The Multicultural Competence Modules offer contextualized, scaffolded anti-oppression educational workshops for DHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so DHS personnel are better equipped to advance its diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic goals individually and collectively. The format for the sessions includes facilitated dialogue with individual and group activities.

### ***Module Two: Understanding Social Identity, Power, and Privilege in the Workplace Goals***

- Define the concept of social identity
- Explore the major forms of social identity in the United States
- Describe the three processes of social identity
- Describe the systems of power, privilege, and oppression
- Identify one’s position on the social identity scale and discuss implications for practice

### ***Module Three: Disrupting Implicit Bias with Inclusive Behaviors in the Workplace Goals***

- Explore the roots of bias
- Differentiate between explicit and implicit bias
- Present the common forms of implicit bias
- Identify strategies to disrupt implicit bias using the multicultural change intervention matrix

**Interface Walkthrough: Bendex:** The goal of the interface walkthrough is to increase knowledge for participants on how to read and apply the information found on the Bendex interface screen.

**Rhode Island Works (RIW) Office Hours:** The RIW Office hours are led by a Clinical Training Specialist and the RIW Program staff member. This space is created for eligibility staff that process RIW cases with the purpose of having them bring real case examples so that the trainer and program staff member can answer or walk through RIBridges and/or policy questions.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Training Series:** The SNAP Training Series is designed to introduce new Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. A wide range of operational tasks are covered and/or discussed to help ensure Eligibility Technicians are prepared for the variety of questions and challenges they may encounter in their role.

**Employee Assistance Program Workshop:** The workshops are provided by DHS' employee assistance program provider, Beacon Health Options. The workshops are offered to give staff information and strategies to address issues like stress, COVID-19 related issues, or other topics.

**Staying Strong and Resilient:** Have you recently changed jobs, had a change or loss in your life, or begun caring for an aging relative? How do you handle challenges, problems, and hardships in your life? In this workshop, participants learn strategies for staying strong and resilient, maintaining a positive outlook, and reducing stress.

**How to Stay Safe:** We live in a world where personal safety is an issue that cannot be ignored. This class covers some basic steps participants can all take to be safer in their surroundings, including best practices and options. Additionally, the class covers what personal behaviors participants can take to help reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

**Customer Service Aide (CSA) Training:** This course is designed to introduce Customer Service Aides (CSA) to processes used in the RIBridges System and provide system-based training. The training approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

**Rhode Island Learning Center Trainings:** These trainings are self-directed. Staff are enrolled through the Learning Management System.

- **FTI/HIPAA:** This is a required training for all DHS employees. This refresher training covers the federal regulations and internal procedures that staff need to follow in protecting customer information.
- **Telephonic Signature/Telephonic Signature - EAD:** To work new documents such as applications, recerts, interims (with a change) and employment plans over the phone, it is imperative that either a signed document is present in the case file OR the worker records a telephonic signature while the customer is on the phone.
- **Asset Verification Training System:** This training provides guidance to staff processing EAD and LTSS requests for Medicaid determinations at the time of application and renewals.
- **SNAP Reinvestment:** This course is designed as a refresher for operations staff on SNAP six-month interim processing. The intent of this course is to review best practices for interim processing.
- **Customer Portal:** In this course, staff are provided an overview of the front and backend of the Customer Portal.
- **Visit Record Refresher:** This course provides an overview of the Visit Record functionality in RIBridges. The purpose of the training is to increase knowledge on the Visit Record function in RIBridges that will be included in all field offices and enhancing consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey.

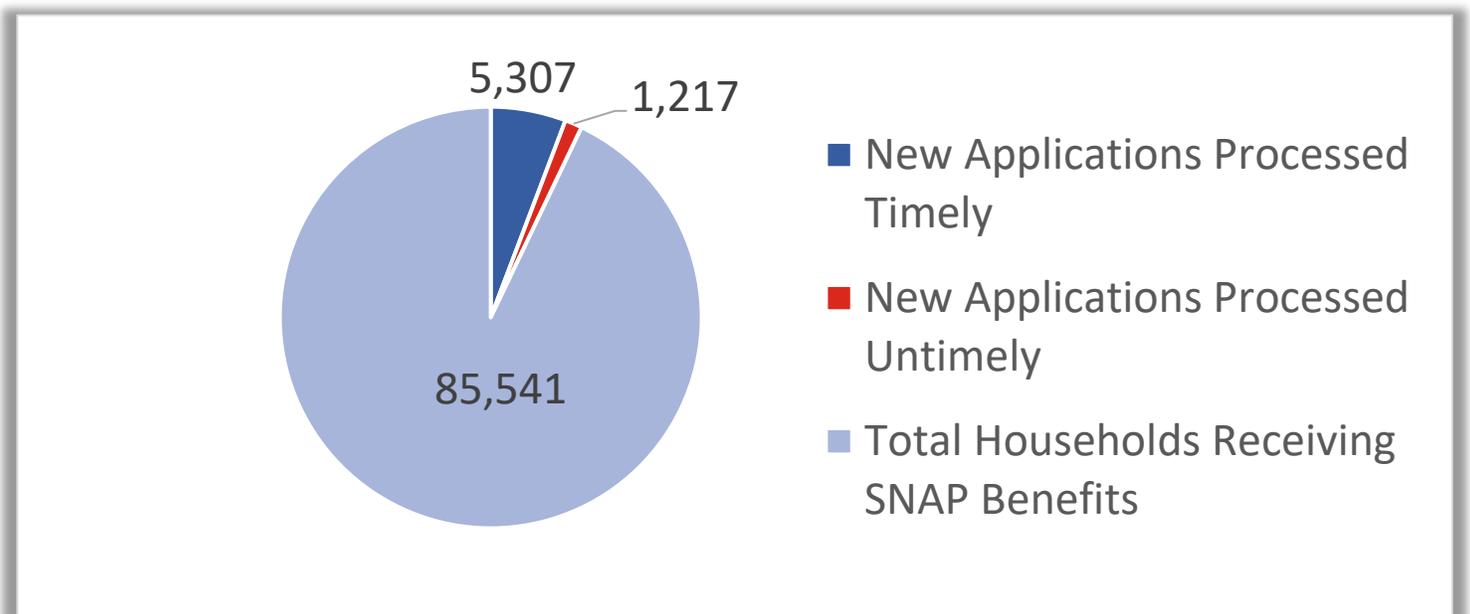
## PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of **April 14, 2022**, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **5,618**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **2,053**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
<b>SNAP Expedited</b>	58	255	313	18	45	63	<b>376</b>
<b>SNAP Non-Expedited</b>	530	589	1119	24	11	35	<b>1154</b>
<b>CCAP</b>	20	284	304	10	30	40	<b>344</b>
<b>GPA Burial</b>	0	3	3	0	2	2	<b>5</b>
<b>SSP</b>	0	36	36	0	4	4	<b>40</b>
<b>GPA</b>	23	41	64	1	7	8	<b>72</b>
<b>RIW</b>	151	177	328	11	12	23	<b>351</b>
<b>Undetermined Medical</b>	24	397	421	118	1410	1528	<b>1949</b>
<b>Medicaid-MAGI</b>	39	45	84	82	91	173	<b>257</b>
<b>MPP</b>	7	260	267	25	189	214	<b>481</b>
<b>Medicaid Complex</b>	11	46	57	21	221	242	<b>299</b>
<b>LTSS</b>	10	245	255	4	31	35	<b>290</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>2378</b>	<b>3251</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>2053</b>	<b>2367</b>	<b>5618</b>

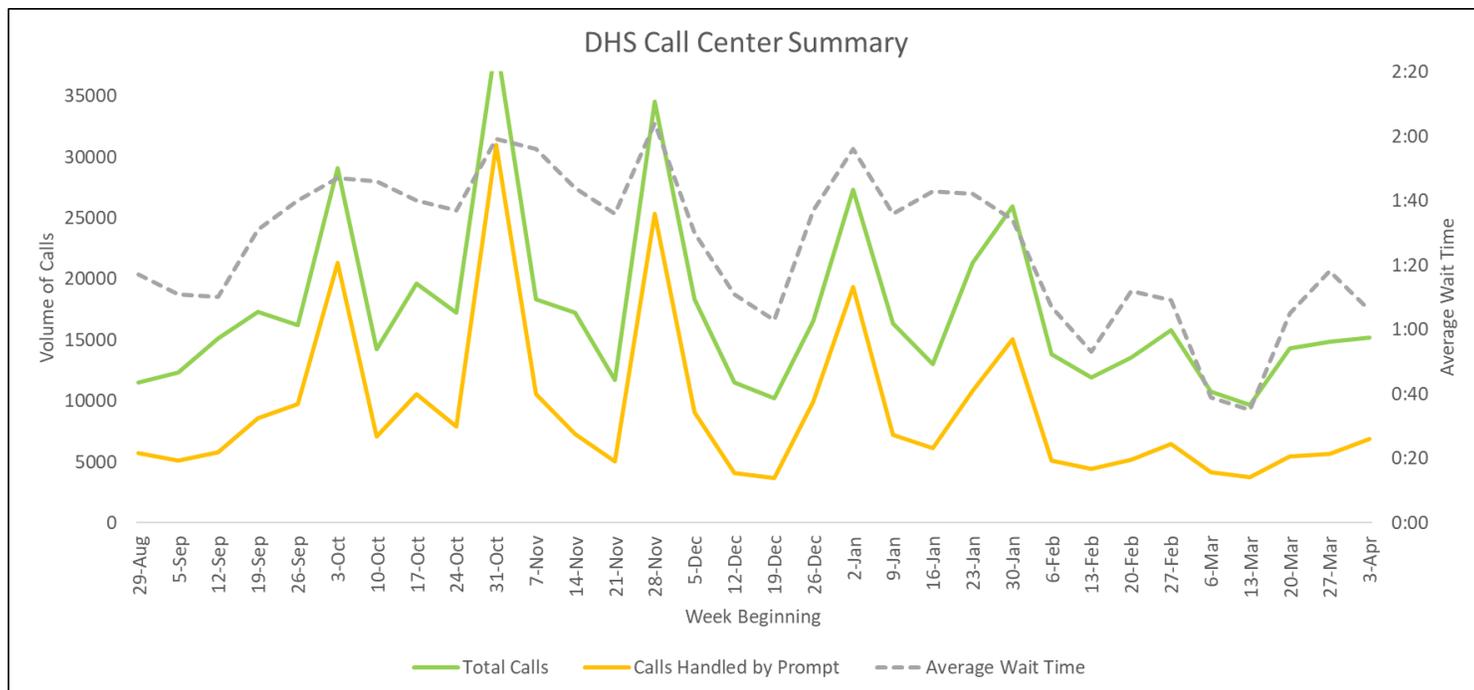
## SNAP TIMELINESS

Despite the impact of COVID-19, **85,541** households received benefits in March 2022. About **81** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. About 19 percent of applications were processed untimely.



## CALL CENTER

For the five-week period of **March 6, 2022, through the week that started on April 3, 2022**, the average wait time to DHS staff was about **57** minutes. DHS recognizes this average wait time is longer than it should be due to pressure points DHS is experiencing, however, we are seeing continual improvements to wait times through operational changes. The busiest week was the week beginning April 3, 2022, and there were **15,195** calls then.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between March 16, 2022 through April 15, 2022.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
20	3/10/2022	524	\$2,227,854.15
20A	3/11/2022	17	\$46,979.11
20B	3/18/2022	20	\$62,269.29
21	3/24/2022	539	\$2,270,957.72
21A	3/25/2022	23	\$68,693.54
21B	4/1/2022	41	\$86,825.58

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (20, 20A & 20B)	561	\$2,337,102.55
Off-cycle (18A & 18B)	37	\$109,248.40
Provider off-cycle/total	7.06%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	4.90%	-
	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (19, 19A & 19B)	603	\$2,426,476.84
Off-cycle (19A & 19B)	64	\$155,519.12
Provider off-cycle/total	11.87%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	6.85%	-

## UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RIBridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the *RIBridges* system.

- April 5, 2022: FNS Response to State's Proposed Methodology